Death Bed Hymns.

The following hymns were repeated entire by my father while on his death bed, and as they are very fine, and not in any of our hymn books, I have requested their publication in these columns:

H. R. HOLSINGER.

While on the verge of life I stand,
And view the scene on either hand,
My spirit struggles with my clay,
And longs to wing its flight away.

Where Jesus dwells my soul would be,
And faints my much lov'd Lord to see:
Earth, twine no more about my heart!
For 'tis far better to depart.

Come, ye angelic envoys! come,
And lead the willing pilgrim home;
Ye know the way to Jesus' throne,—
Source of my joys, and of your own.

That blissful interview, how sweet!
To fall transported at his feet!
Rais'd in his arms, to view his face,
Through the full beamings of his grace!

As with a seraph's voice to sing!
To fly as on a cherub's wing!
Performing, with unwearied hands,
The present Savior's high commands.

Yet, with these prospects full in sight,
We'll wait thy signal for the flight;
For, while thy service we pursue,
We find a heav'n in all we do.—DODDRIDGE.

Vital spark of heav'nly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame:
Trembling, hoping, ling'ring, flying,
O, the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

Hark! they whisper, angels say,
"Sister spirit, come away!"
What is this absorbs me quite?
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirit, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

The world recedes, it disappears!
Heav'n opens on my eyes—my ears
With sounds seraphic ring!
Lend, lend your wings, I mount! I fly!
O grave, where is thy victory?
O death, where is thy sting?—POPE.

Rational and Mechanical Obedience.

BY J. H. WORST.

There is but little doubt in my mind but that the informal manner in which the Christian church was organized has a striking significance. Under the Jewish dispensation the rules were very rigid both as to religious and domestic economy. The veriest trifle had its beginning and end regulated by law.

But under the Christian dispensation the great bulk of human action is regulated by general and not by specific law.

There is no specific law in God's word relative to gambling, brewing, or forgery, and many other evils that exist; yet there is a way to reach them. There are general laws that sustain themselves by their consistency; by the sense of right that is inherent in them. Such laws need no protection, either moral or physical, but by appealing directly to man's higher nature sustain themselves. True, many disobey these laws but they do so knowingly conscious of the results that must follow.

The purely mechanical is in advance of the purely intellectual. Thousands of good mechanics do not fully understand all the philosophical principles embodied in the machinery of their own construction.

They work by rule, become expert within a small horizon, mechanically at least.

The Jewish religion was largely mechanical, where rules rather than mental volition predominated.

It was doubtless well adapted to that particular stage of thought.

To revive that effete system in our day and substitute it for the system established by Christ, is to confess that we are at least three centuries behind the times in our ideas of Christian ethics.

Then a man refrained from certain indulgences because they were forbidden in the law; now he does the same thing from a knowledge of right and wrong.

Then the wrong did not consist in the mere violation of the law, but the evil resulted from the particular indulgence itself; but the law was substituted as a safeguard against the indulgence, because the end sought was more readily attainable in that way. It was more readily comprehended.

Laws were not enacted as mere tests of mechanical obedience, but mechanical obedience obviated the evil results of moral and physical transgression.

Mechanical obedience reached its climax in rational obedience— an actual knowledge of right and wrong.

The letter of the law eventually unfolded the spirit of the law—its intent and purpose.

Grand larcency is interdicted by civil law. To obey this law merely for the sake of the law—to escape its penalties—is one thing; but to obey it from a rational knowledge of its justice growing out of man's relation to his fellow man is quite another thing. The former is purely mechanical, the latter, from a conviction of right and wrong. The result is the same as far as it relates to the supremacy of the law, but the motives are widely different.

To do right from a sense of desiring to do right, law or no law menacing, should be the motive of every follower of Christ. Then there would be no trifling. There would be no tampering with doubtful indulgences. No straining of irrelevant passages of Scripture to plausibly cover up a fault or interdict an innocent act.

Then obedience would mean something, have a tangible object in view.

I do not believe that Christ gave a single law to his church as a mere test of obedience or disobedience. I do not believe in mechanical Christianity.

I do not believe a man is any better for literally observing the entire formula of Christian ordinances and sacraments, if said observances do not produce the designed effect upon his spiritual entity upon his moral consciousness; upon that part of himself that is deathless.

Obedience is destined to develop, educate, unfold and purify the soul, and foster an affinity for heavenly conditions.

Disobedience means the lack of these heaven-reaching qualities, the want of this heaven-obtaining culture, rather than punishment for simple disobedience. Failure to grasp these glorious possibilities while every condition is favorable for attaining them is a just punishment.

This is why I would not favor the elimination of one single ordinance. I would not have the church lose the advantage of one single soul educator, lest the symmetry of Christian development be marred.

I should be sorry to have it truthfully said of us that we observe the ordinances of the Lord's house—to be obedient in a literal sense—only this and nothing more.

But specific laws relative to the ordinary things of social and domestic life will bring about this very condition, and is the very thing that Christ foresaw, and provided the remedy for in the manner in which the church was organized. The very genius of Christianity is based upon intelligent volition and not upon abstract and arbitrary rules. The Christian system is in advance of such methods.

All the culture resulting from Christian worship; all the high aims and noble impulses imported by the spirit of Christ will always guide a man aright in matters of indulgence not specifically interdicted in the Gospel if a man is honest, and if he is not honest no rules will improve his character.

If he desires to do right, which is the presumption of his profession, the general laws regulating the eternal principles of right and wrong are ample for his guidance in minor matters, not specified in the Gospel.

The latitude for the scope of individual judgment is ample to test every man's sincerity of purpose. Without it, he would hardly know his own strength.

Under the Christian dispensation every believer has an end in view. Every law of this dispensation is to promote the accomplishment of this desired goal; and every sincere follower of Christ will depart himself voluntarily in harmony with the end sought in ordinances and sacraments.

Williamsport, Dakota.

Pruning.

At this season of the year, those who have orchards, vineyards, or plants of most any kind, usually give them a general pruning. A day or two ago, as I was cutting the dry and too thickly clustered branches from my vines the thought came to me, how well it would be for each individual to give him or herself a general pruning at least once a year or oftener if necessary! We are compared to vines or trees in the Holy Word, and we are expected to bring forth good fruit. To accomplish this, all the branches that have a tendency to too much growth and not much fruit, should be nipped as well as the dry and too thickly clustered. The tongue is a branch that requires considerable pruning. It has a tendency to evil-speaking, exageration, backbiting, whispering, boasting, and such like that should be cut off.

These should be looked after daily, or perhaps they may become uncontrollable so as to require the ax. In looking at our crop of apples that grew last summer, I wondered why they were so knotty, and why they could not just as well have been nice and good. Our Heavenly Father may wonder the same of us, why so many of us bear such worthless fruit.

The heart is a hidden member that often becomes impure, although hard to see, yet the mind of the individual, usually knows the condition of the heart. Of course, it cannot be pruned as branches are, but by "bleeding" it, it can be brought into a better condition. I have a plum tree that refused to bear any fruit at all, until last summer. It always bloomed as much as any tree on the place, and had all the appearance of a fine crop, until before the time of ripening, then all would become as though something had stung them, and in a short time all fall off. A neighbor of mine told me to "bleed" the tree—slit it half a dozen times from the branches to the root, inserting the knife as deep as possible. I did so, and the same year I had a fine crop of plums.

So it is with the heart it often needs "bleeding" to let out the impurities—as hatred, envy, strife, deceit or any such things as may have accumulated there. Appearance or pride is another branch that if not looked after closely, will make more display or appearance than there will be found fruit. It has a tendency to choke out all the real life from the vine or tree.

In the case of the above named plum tree, it had all the appearance of a fine yield of fruit, it bloomed as beautifully as any other tree, but at the time of gathering the fruit it had none. Perhaps some professing Christians today have all the appearance of being faithful Christians, but it may only be "blossom" and at the time of gathering the fruit, will there be any? We should remember the saying of Christ of a fruitless tree. Cut it down and cast it into the fire, why cumbereth it the ground. We should not neglect pruning, for if we do God is apt to do it for us. Sometimes it is seriously neglected and our Heavenly Father sees the need of the knife and it is felt keenly. Consequently our branches are often seriously clipped.

Let us, when we approach the vine, tree or plant, to prune, remember that forus to bear good fruit, we ourselves need the same. G. A. COPP.

Fisher's Hill, Va., Feb. 25, 1886.

The Real King.

A writer of great intellectual ability and fame, being reproved for carrying in his winter's coal, replied, "The man who is ashamed to carry in his own coal deserves to sit all winter by an empty grate." Honest toil, to the noble mind, brings no disgrace. As between the man who lives by his own labor and the one who lives by the labor of others, the first is the real king and hero. It deserves the strongest emphasis with the young that labor crowns life with honor, and idleness with shame.—THE CONTRIBUTOR.

You that are little ones, when the Lord speaks to you, cry to him "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;" and when, in the house of God, the word is preached to sinners, remember it is preached to you quite as much as to men who are six feet high.—C. H. SPURGEON.